

COVID-19 SWAB TEST EXPERIENCES OF EMPLOYEES AS REQUIRED BY THEIR EMPLOYERS

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ABSTRACT

Undergoing swab tests to ensure a safe work environment were required by the national government due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE, 2020) stated the need for regular swab testing of workers in various sectors to prevent the further spread of the virus across offices and factories. Data was gathered from the employees of the Bridgestone Company in Rosario, Cavite. The study aims to know the experiences of the Bridgestone employees who underwent COVID-19 swab testing, to learn their various experiences and meanings from it, and to know how they view it in the context of workforce productivity. The researchers used a phenomenological approach by using interview guides for the data collection. Seventeen questions were asked during the course of collecting data, and participants were selected based on the quota sampling. The findings showed that the process of undergoing the COVID-19 swab test was painful, yet the procedure was done quickly. Although the participants were nervous regarding the possible results, the process was deemed as essential in knowing who is positive or not, as well as in preventing the spread of the virus. Moreover, there was an observed slow down in the productivity of the employees at first, yet the swab testing procedure allowed them to quickly regain productivity within the workforce. Conclusions of the findings showed that undergoing the swab test was painful, yet it is essential and contributed to the productivity of the employees of the Bridgestone Company.

INTRODUCTION

Despite the current COVID-19 pandemic, work continues and thus is affected by the implementation of travel bans, skeleton crews, remote work, and social distancing. In many organizations, these changes have raised questions and concerns (Anthony & Patrick, 2020). With the implementation of such protocols, the Philippine government required the undergoing of swab tests for employees of companies to ensure a safe working environment. The COVID-19 swab test involves a six-inch long nasopharyngeal swab cavity inserted between the nose and mouth (UC Davis Health, 2020). This process must be regularly done to prevent the further transmission of the disease within offices and factories (Department of Labor and Employment [DOLE], 2020).

As the health crisis became evident in two hundred sixteen countries, the COVID-19 ongoing disease was considered as a current health crisis pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020). There has been an excess of eighty thousand reported cases as of twenty twenty in the Philippines, as reported by the Department of Health (DOH). Cases continue to arise, and it exerts implications on the jobs of various citizens. As the necessity of the swab testing was implemented, DOH Undersecretary Marie Rosario Vergerie claims that the laboratories of the Philippine Red Cross are capable of conducting five thousand tests a day (Gonzales, 2020).

With this, Williams and Haire (2020) stated that the operation of swab testing may cause fears, such as fearing the swab test procedure, suspicions on government and healthcare programs, and possible results from the extent of public health inspections. Hence, the fear of COVID-19 and its implications must be addressed since it may lead to enhanced job outcomes, increased job satisfaction, decreased levels of stress, and reduced intention to resign from their profession (Labargue & Delos Santos, 2020).

Furthermore, the researchers want to know the experiences of the Bridgestone employees who underwent the COVID-19 swab-testing and explore the meanings given to such. The researchers would also like to know how they view the swab test procedure in the context of productivity within the workforce during the pandemic.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

- Phenomenological Study

Method of Collecting Data and Development of Research Instrument

- Interview guide that consists of seventeen questions regarding the participants' subjective and personal data.

Sampling Design

- Quota Sampling
- Participants: ten (10) employees from Bridgestone Precision Molding Philippines, Inc. in Rosario, Cavite that were required to undergo the COVID-19 swab test by their employers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

2.1 What are the experiences of the Bridgestone employees who underwent the COVID-19 swab testing?

The following themes represent the experiences of the Bridgestone employees who underwent the COVID-19 swab-testing: (a) Nervous about the result, (b) Scared, worried about family's safety, (c) Sad due to possible discrimination, (d) The procedure is painful, (e) Collecting of data, (f) Inserting of the swab into the nose, (g) One and two swab tests, (h) Nothing was asked to do before undergoing a swab test, (i) Went to hospital for a check-up, (j) Quick, (around one to ten minutes only), (k) The swab test was painful, and (l) Anxious about the result.

2.2 What meanings do the Bridgestone employees give from their experience of swab testing?

The following are the experiences of the Bridgestone employees from their swab testing experiences: (a) Awareness and confirmation, (b) Limits the spread of the virus, (c) It would be better if everyone will undergo a swab test, (d) Identify those employees that are positive, (e) Very important for everyone's safety, (f) Awareness in the surroundings, (g) Became health-conscious, and (h) Important to ensure safety.

2.3 How do employees view swab tests in relation to productivity of the workforce during a pandemic?

Accorded with this research question, the researchers have identified the following themes: (a) Not reporting to work, (b) Slow productivity at first, and (c) The workforce is slowly going back to normal after the swab testing.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

3.1 The researchers conclude that the conducted COVID-19 swab test returned the company's productivity workforce to one-hundred percent. When the COVID-19 pandemic started, only fifty percent of employees were allowed to work in the company. After conducting the swab test, the company's productivity workforce was able to return to a hundred percent, considering that it helped limit the spread of the virus and diminished the COVID-19 cases in Bridgestone company.

3.2 The researchers conclude that the COVID-19 swab test caused fear and assurance to the Bridgestone Company employees. Before the employees had the swab test, they feared the possibility of becoming positive for COVID-19 and the idea that the swab test process is painful. Afterward, the COVID-19 swab test results provided assurance of whether they were infected or not. They have also become more well-informed about their surroundings and become health conscious after taking the swab test.

3.3 The researchers conclude that the procedure of the COVID-19 swab test was excruciating. After the Bridgestone Company employees took the swab test, they have mentioned that they felt physical pain due to the insertion of a six-inch long swab into the cavity between their nose and mouth.

